

# Consuming Appetites

## Global Patterns in Consumption: Food, Energy and Materials New Community Project

### Just the Basics

- The earth's population is 7.5 billion people, and predicted to peak at 11 billion by 2100. World per person median income: \$10,000. US: about \$59,000 (98<sup>th</sup> percentile globally); Liberia: \$781. The world's poorest 3 billion people: under \$2.50.
- The richest 20% of the world's people earn 75% of the income, consume 80% of the world's resources and create 83% of the world's waste. The poorest 50% of the world's population have 1% of world's household wealth. Earning the US minimum wage brings in more income than 95 percent of the world's people.
- Per capita US material consumption (all fuels, minerals, wood products, metals, agricultural raw materials, etc. for industry, commerce, household) per day: around 225 lbs. per person (Asia: 35; Africa: 25), equal to 27 tractor trailer loads pppy. Per person municipal waste in US per year: 1800 lbs.; with 4% of world's population, we use one-third of all materials consumed on earth. US consumers discard over 50 billion aluminum cans annually—650,000 tons—enough to build 8000 747's.
- US'ers spend \$21 billion on bottled water per year (more than all US government aid to the world's poor), and toss 60 million water bottles daily. Petroleum to produce, ship and dispose of US water bottles: 50 million barrels per year. Globally, 1.2 billion people don't lack access to clean water, causing 2500 people—mostly children—to die daily.
- Globally, there are approximately 4.5 acres of land available to meet each person's consumption needs. Already global per capita consumption is at 5.1 acres per person. In the US, per capita consumption demands 23.7 acres. If everyone took this much, we'd need 4 more planets.

### emissions@auto.com

- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by US citizens: 17.4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per person per year. Per person emissions in poor areas of world: .5 ton per year. Energy usage for all purposes (in coal equivalent): 10 tons per person per year in US; 150 pounds pppy in Bangladesh. Automobile miles driven in the US annually: approximately 3 trillion. On average, combusting one gallon of gasoline releases 20 pounds of carbon dioxide.
- The US consumes 20% of all fossil fuels burned in the world. Average per person annual energy consumption in the US from all sources is around 90,000 kilowatts, twice the EU average and 15 times the average African. Globally, 1.3 billion people have no electricity.

### Where have all the flowers gone. . .

- The US has lost 50 % of wetlands since the colonial era, 90% of prairie, 95% of virgin forests. Globally, 25% of large mammals are endangered, 14% of birds, 12% of plants; 33% of topsoil has been lost. The population of earth's non-human creatures is down 50% since 1970.
- 25-30 million acres are deforested around the world each year. One acre of rainforest sequesters 1000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. Rainforest is being cut down at the rate of an acre a second. Culprits: Ranching, agriculture, palm oil, fire wood. Paper production is responsible for 20% of the world's deforestation. California alone has recently lost over 100 million trees to climate change-related drought and bark beetle infestation.
- The richest 20% of the world's people consume 84% of the world's paper. Annual US per person paper consumption: 600 pounds (writing, packaging, etc), requiring 1 billion trees; 51,000 trees per day for paper towel consumption in the US. Africa paper use: 16 pounds pppy. Paper needed for literacy and communication: 75 pounds per person.
- Per capita water use in US: 2000 gallons per day (80-100 gal. for household use, remainder for power generation, agriculture, industry). 30 percent of water used is to produce the meat; 15% for the sugar. Lawn grass? 31 million acres under irrigation (7.8 billion gpd). Rate of depletion of Ogallala Aquifer—primarily to irrigate grain for cattle—12 billion cubic meters per year. Producing electricity: 41% of US water usage (100 billion gpd, used primarily for cooling).

### Food for Thought

- US per person grain consumption is about 2000 pounds per year, or about 6 pounds per day (grain produced for all purposes, including live-stock feed). In poorer countries, the ration is under a pound. As it takes as much as 15 pounds of grain for a pound of beef, 4 for pork, 2 for poultry, meat is an unaffordable luxury for many. And livestock production is the leading source of greenhouse gases globally, including deforestation for pasture and feed production.
- In poorer countries, 50% experience "wasting" or "stunting". Two billion people—mostly women and children—are iron deficient (increased maternal mortality, mental slowness in children).
- The USA wastes 300 million pounds of food every day. Globally, 795 million people are malnourished. Some 7,000 children die from hunger-related causes daily — a child every 5 seconds.

Sources: World Watch Institute, UNDP, [Living Planet Report](#), [Our Ecological Footprint](#), [State of the World's Children](#), US Census Bureau, [Omnivores Dilemma](#), [Mongabay.com](#), WFP, EPA, IEA.org

"No one can serve two masters; you cannot serve both God and material things." - Jesus of Nazareth